1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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which the food for the community was cooked, but we do not think they would touch it or assist in any way in the cooking. At Omuni a menstruous woman is isolated under a rough shelter where she is waited upon by a younger unmarried sister or cousin who, it was stated, should not herself have attained puberty. During her seclusion she may eat any food cooked at the ordinary fire, but a special platter is kept for her use. The girls who look after her suffer no restrictions. This happens every time a girl or woman menstruates.

Marriage takes place at an early age; it was said that girls sometimes married before puberty, and as we heard of this at Henebedda, Bandaraduwa, and Omuni, we see no reason to doubt the truth of the statement[1]. At Omuni it was pointed out that a certain amount of breast development was necessary before marriage, so that it is probable that connection does not antedate puberty by more than a short time.

With regard to the frequency of such child marriages, we can only say that we never saw any very young girls with babies. Perhaps at the present day prenuptial connection is more common than marriage between the very young, though it is obviously difficult to decide when prenuptial love-making between individuals destined for each other gives place to marriage, among people whose marriages are accompanied with but slight ceremony. It must be remembered that the marriage gift of landed or personal property to a son-in-law, which was formerly customary, is obsolescent at the present day, and this not only makes it more difficult to determine whether marriage has taken place, but probably actually tends to make the exact time of the assumption of the married state less clearly defined.

On account of these considerations we are unable to express any definite opinion as to the frequency of prenuptial connection, the few instances we heard of were between individuals occupying the relationship of *kura* and *naena*, who would in any case marry each other. Thus Kaira of Henebedda and his wife grew up in the same group, and as they had played together as

[1] We are indebted to Mr Frederick Lewis for the information that this is a common practice among Tamils.